



## Week 28 - Faith and Believing

**Faith is the key that opens the door to salvation and all of God's blessings.**

In Mark 1:15, Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel." Repentance and faith are integrally connected. Paul wrote that he was "solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

Repentance positions, by turning us towards God. Faith possesses, by taking God at His Word.

"Belief" is much more than a passive assent to the truth (see James 2:19-20). Believing (in Greek, *pisteuw*) is a dynamic reliance upon Christ and His saving work on the cross. To believe in the Lord means to completely thrust oneself onto Him as the "author and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Other words for saving faith are obeying, trusting, hoping, yielding, being faithful. True faith offers one's whole life to God. Anything less is not sufficient.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is an invisible certainty that connects us to God and brings spiritual things into the natural world. God is Spirit (John 4:24). We can intellectually know about God, but can only know Him personally through faith. Faith is the foundation of our walk with God, a vital spiritual force, and a gift of God. Victory comes through faith rooted in God. In Christ, we know God as our reliable Father. His faithfulness increases our faith. Hebrews 11, the "Hall of Faith," lists exploits accomplished through faith in God. We, too, can live a life of heroic faith.

**Faith is the only way to approach and please God.**

We do not approach God in doubt and skepticism. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." To believe in, obey and seek to please an invisible God, we "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

**Faith is the gift that secures salvation.**

Salvation comes through faith: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Whether BC and AD, God's children have always been saved by faith: "Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for 'The righteous man shall live by faith'" (Galatians 3:11).

Before Christ, God's people looked forward to His saving work: "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance..." (Hebrews 11:13). They walked in obedience to Him, trusting their eternity in His hands.

Under the new covenant, we look back to Christ's redeeming work on the cross. "For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, But the righteous man shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).

### **Faith assures us that we are saved.**

By faith we gain assurance of salvation, grasping His word in times of doubt, and standing on His promise that "whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). In 1 John 5:31, John encourages us of our standing before God: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:31).

### **Faith receives answers to prayers.**

When we pray, we are to ask in faith that He will perform anything we ask in His name. Jesus promises us: "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22). Our generous Lord shows how pleased He is to answer us:

Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! (Matthew 7:9-11)

God delights to answer the requests we give Him by faith and in His name.

### **Faith overcomes the world and the devil.**

We face a spiritual battle. Satan has hounded humanity ever since Eden. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12; see also John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8).

We need not fear the devil since God provides faith for our victory. "In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16); "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Real Faith is...A Gift of God "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God..." (Ephesians 2:8-9) Reliance on Christ Faith rests completely

in the Person of Jesus: “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...” (Hebrews 12:2) A Substantive Persuasion Faith is an assurance of God’s promises based on God’s work in us. “Abraham ... being fully persuaded ... “ (Romans 4:21)

**Review:**

1. Repentance positions, faith possesses. What does this mean
2. Can we be sure that we are saved? How?
3. What will give us the final victory over the world, the flesh and the devil?